

has much brilliance, also more shallowness of sound than the 78, further immersing the Milstein violin in the Steinberg background.

## Reger, Kabalevsky, Stravinsky

REGER: "Serenade," Opus 95. Eugen Jochum conducting the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. (Capitol-Telefunken album ECL 8026, \$7.50; LP 8026, \$4.85.)

KABALEVSKY: *Symphony No. 2, Opus 19.* Jacques Rachmilovich conducting the Symphony Orchestra of the Academy of Santa Cecilia, Rome. (Capitol-Telefunken album ECL 8032, \$5; LP 8032, \$3.85.)

STRAVINSKY: "Jeu de Cartes." The composer conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. (Capitol-Telefunken album FCL 8028, \$5.75; LP 8028, \$3.85.)

The process of re-education about Max Reger which began last spring with Capitol's issue of his "Böcklin Suite" continues with the most illuminating contribution to date. If the intervening "Variations on a Theme by Mozart" were more or less of the pedantic persuasion expected of him, this "Serenade" is a score of dazzling freshness, melodic invention, and orchestral mastery. Perhaps its most likely predecessors are the Brahms "Serenades" of Opus 17, but this is not only far better music than either of those, but much more ambitious in scope and successful in execution.

If you can conceive a Dvorak with the intellectual power of a Richard Strauss, you have something of the effect this work conveys to me. It dates from 1906, when Reger was thirty-seven, and shows him a melodist akin to Strauss, Sibelius, and Elgar, among recent contemporaries, one of the dwindling company to possess that gift. Jochum's performance is a thoroughly convincing one, not only lyric where appropriate but urgent and incisive as well. The string tone is a little coarse in the LP, and there is no great tonal luxuriance at any time, but the musical experience is there for all to savor.

One disaffecting element in all these Capitol-Telefunken LP's is an apparent misapprehension of what LP is all about: for the Reger is broken in the middle of the third movement, the Kabalevsky—a busy, "dramatic," and not very absorbing piece—in the middle of the second, and the Stravinsky likewise. It is possible that this Reger was just unworkable, for the full content of two twelve-inch sides has been used. However, both the Kabalevsky and the Stravinsky are on ten-inch discs, a dubious economy when it re-

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## Images of Melancholy

DEBUSSY: "Images pour Orchestre." Ernest Ansermet conducting the Suisse Romande Orchestra. (London LLP 44, \$5.85.)

"Ibéria" is the second of Debussy's three "Images pour Orchestre." It has been recorded nine times, and rarely does a major symphony orchestra let a season go by without programming it at least once. But what of its two companion pieces? "Gigues" and "Rondes de Printemps" have languished in obscurity. To understand why, we must first take note of the refusal of Debussyites to come to terms with this composer's evolving modes of expression. By the time Debussy embarked on the "Images" many of his earlier esthetic notions had been abandoned. We find at this juncture of his creative development that muted languor has given way to crystalline forthrightness; he is now more concerned with formal patterns, with the weaving together of horizontal melodic strands; his infatuation with misty vertical chords has abated. Debussy has changed. He no more resembles the composer of "L'Après-midi d'un faune" than the Wagner of "Tristan" resembles the Wagner of "Tannhäuser." But for some reason Debussy is expected to have remained static, and this has engendered considerable confusion. Thus it is that listeners are sometimes disappointed with the "Images," finding them too brisk, too angular in contour, not the "real Debussy."

That "Ibéria" has survived this misunderstanding is due partly to the poetic literary headings which precede each movement, partly to the intensity and vitality of its invention. "Gigues"

and "Rondes de Printemps" are endowed with less programmatic significance. And they are, admittedly, compounded of a lower order of creative genius. We can say the same of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony in relation to the Ninth, yet not banish it from our concert halls.

"Gigues," the first of these "Images," is the least accessible. The English jig, usually a merry, carefree dance, is here charged by Debussy with bitter melancholy. As first enunciated by the oboe d'amore the jig resembles, in mood and timbre if not in melody, that doleful piping on the English horn which opens the last act of "Tristan." Soon this sad jig is woven into an active, pulsating fabric. In this ambivalence between melancholy melodic material and nervous, impelling rhythms lies the score's difficulty. But here is an instance where familiarity breeds respect: respect not only for the technical craftsmanship which Debussy manifests, but also for his ability to transmit the desolation of a soul without once wearing his heart on his sleeve.

"Rondes de Printemps" presents a similar contradiction. The arrival of spring is a subject which ordinarily calls for both rejoicing and refulgence. Debussy acknowledges this in his music, but cannot refrain from commenting that the inevitable outcome of spring is fall and winter. Again we remark that noble and profound melancholy, more powerful in its very reticence, which Debussy shares with his great compatriots Flaubert and Cézanne.

I shall say little about this particular recording. London is to be commended for waxing the "Images" *in toto* and for assigning it to so distinguished a conductor and orchestra. However, this LP disc cannot be called a success. As Mr. Burke points out (page 58), there is little homogeneity to the sound. Moreover, the surface noise often obliterates the delicacy of Debussy's scoring, and there is one point where a sloppy job of splicing leaves an awkward hiatus in the music's flow. We expect better of a record which bears the proud initials of ffrr, and I feel sure London will soon make improvements. In view of these deficiencies it would be unfair to dwell long on Ansermet's interpretation. Let me voice the hope, however, that London will retain in its catalogue the Munch waxing of "Ibéria." Admirable as Ansermet's reading is, I feel that Munch brings a more imaginative approach to the complex rhythms and tonal balances of this buoyant score.

—ROLAND GELATT.



—Bettmann Archive.

A presentation photo from Claude Debussy to a friend—"muted languor has given way to crystalline forthrightness."

# Recordings Reports on Classical Releases

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WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Anderson: "Sleigh Ride." Fiedler conducting the Boston "Pops" Orchestra. Victor 10-1481, \$1.	Connoisseurs of "Pops" recordings will note a rounder sonority, a richer blend of sound in this fine reproduction than that to which they are accustomed. Also an uncommonly gay invention by Anderson, of which the highest praise is that it is worthy of Eric Coates himself.
Bach: "Italian Concerto." Edith Weiss-Mann, harpsichord. Allegro LA 5, \$3.85.	The first new version of this in a considerable time, and the first ever on LP. It comes off reasonably well, considering that Weiss-Mann is one of the more muscular harpsichordists, and the sponsors have chosen to provide the listener with all the pedal and mechanism noises of the harpsichord. The "Concerto After Benedetto Marcello" is the upside, and generally a lesser work. Clean, slightly brittle sound throughout.
Beethoven: Trio in E flat, Opus 70, No. 2. Alma Trio. Allegro LA 4, \$4.85.	More good repertory from Allegro, this time matched with thoroughly able performance, the trio's members being Roman Totenberg, violin, Adolph Baller, piano, and Gabor Retjo, cello. Highly integrated, well-sounding performance of this work, which has been unjustly obscured by the "Geister." With it is a lively playing of Haydn's G major Trio (with the "Gypsy" Rondo). In both cases, the LP is mechanically excellent, the tonal fidelity and balance splendid.
Brahms: "Hungarian Dances," Nos. 1 and 3. Clemens Krauss conducting the London Symphony. London R. 1011, \$2.10.	A graceful respite from Brucker masses and Von Einem "Concertos," played in crisp, idiomatic manner by Krauss, and suavely reproduced. The third (rarely favored on records) is particularly welcome for its interesting suggestions of both Dvorak and Grieg.
Caccini: "Amarilli," other songs. Licia Albanese, soprano, with Victor Trucco, piano. RCA Victor album 1316, \$4; WMO 1316, \$3.35.	A much thinner, shriller version of this song than was recently offered, on London, by Suzanne Danco. Mme. Albanese, in fact, is vocally luxuriant in only two of her six songs: Szulc's "Clair de Lune" and Campbell-Tipton's "Spirit Flower," for strain and stress are much too evident in Tchaikovsky's "Lullaby" (Opus 16, No. 1), Liszt's "Oh! quand je dors," and A. Scarlatti's "Se florindo è fedele." Suitable reproduction, somewhat lacking depth in the 45 rpm.
Cardillo: "Core 'ngrato." Mario Lanza, tenor, with orchestra directed by C. Callinicos. RCA Victor 12-1026, \$1.25; WDM 1330, 95¢.	Much the best of a batch of discs by the latest "second Caruso." Lanza is far from that: rather a young man gifted with a superb voice of indefinite size. Till he has been heard without benefit of amplification nothing more can be said. He sings these Neapolitan songs (the upside is "Mamma mia che vo' sape?") in the proper tear-drenched tones, but the same in "Che gelida manina" and "Celeste Aida" are loud, vulgar, and not very funny. As for Kern's "They Didn't Believe Me," Lanza is both in the wrong church and the wrong pew. Powerful reproduction, especially the 45 rpm.
Chabrier: "Fête Polonoise." Monteux conducting the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor 12-0978, \$1.25.	A rather more ingenious piece than the title suggests, this excerpt from "Le Roi Malgré Lui" is in the good, rousing, boisterous manner of Chabrier's "Marche Joyeuse" and "Bourrée Fantasque." Monteux is no man to spare an accent, resulting in a performance of breadth and vivacity. Good conventional recording, a little wanting in string resonance.
Donizetti: "Spirito gentil," etc. Eugene Conley, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Alberto Erede. London LLP 26, \$5.85.	Dazzling virtuosity by the American Conley, in this air especially, but also in various others by Bizet, Gounod, Flotow, Verdi, and Puccini (two "Toscas," a "Bohème," and a "Turandot"). The conventional arias range from good to excellent, but Conley's clean, hard-hitting top tones make exciting listening in the Donizetti. One of London's better LP's in sound, also.
Handel: "Timotheus Cries." Trevor Anthony, bass, with the London Symphony conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. London T. 5157, \$2.10.	A hitherto unrecorded air from "Alexander's Feast," sung with taste and understanding by Anthony, also a rounder quality of voice than was heard from him in the Beecham version of "Messiah." Very sprightly work by Sargent in the bright first section, well modulated pathos thereafter.
Rachmaninoff: "Vocalise." Lily Pons, soprano, with Andre Kostelanetz and orchestra. Columbia 3-241, 90¢.	Though one would not think it likely, this is one of the rare recordings of this "Vocalise" by a vocalist—most others have been by orchestras. Miss Pons has too much ho-ho-ho in her tones for my taste, but it is otherwise well sung. There have been better versions of Rimsky's "Rose and the Nightingale" than hers on the reverse side.
Respighi: "Arie di Corte." Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia 3-190, 90¢.	I can hardly commend this seven-inch microgroove, with its break in the middle of a relatively brief piece, when there is doubtless an LP on the way of which it will be a consecutive part. Otherwise deft playing of a well-arranged excerpt from Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances."
Sieczynski: "Wien, du stadt meiner träume." Mario Berini, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Max Rudolf. Columbia 3-294, 90¢.	This record is obviously for listening, not for reviewing; for a seidel or two of <i>dunkles</i> would doubtless make its leisurely tempo sound just right. Berini sings this and the upside "Ich muss wieder einmal in Grinzing sein" with fine vocal quality, uncommon enunciation of the text, and a full measure of support from Rudolf.
Schubert: "Der Lindenbaum" and "Die Post." Heinrich Schlusnus, baritone, with Sebastian Peschko, piano. London T 5160. \$2.10.	The postwar voice of Schlusnus, in unexpected amplitude and abundance. Only one with an aficionado's ear for Schlusnus's peerless best would note here or there a strain for a top tone or a blemish in production. Otherwise these are performances to be compared only with his own. Superbly clear recording, ideal for lieder.
Schubert: Trio in E flat, Opus 100. Alma Trio. Allegro LA 1, \$4.85.	Unequal reproduction on LP is the bane of this worthy enterprise, played by the personnel noted for the Beethoven trio above. The playing is able, though inclined to spurn the fine points of Schubert's writing, but it is the wiry violin and percussive piano which are particularly disaffecting. The Beethoven is not so afflicted.
Wagner: "Wahn, Wahn" ("Die Meistersinger"). Paul Schoeffler with the National Symphony conducted by Karl Rankl. London T. 5159, \$2.10.	The most of this superb scene to be heard on records since the days when the Schorr recording was considered a reasonable likeness of voice and orchestra. Schoeffler does not command the exceptional sweetness of nature that Schorr conveyed, but his rich, meaty voice (soon to be heard at the Metropolitan) is supervised with complete understanding and a wealth of expressive detail. Rankl collaborates sensitively, and the Kingsway Hallmark is on the sound.

—IRVING KOLODIN.